

**TO:** MAYOR & COUNCILLORS  
**FROM:** INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND FRIENDSHIP CITIES COMMITTEE  
**SUBJECT:** **2025 SISTER CITY VISIT TO KUSHIRO, JAPAN**  
**PURPOSE:** To seek approval for a delegation of Council to visit Sister City Kushiro, Japan.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

**THAT** a delegation visit to the Sister City Kushiro, Japan, in 2025 to commemorate the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary, be considered.

### **1.0 POLICY SECTION**

The International Relations and Friendship Cities Committee (IRFCC) is an advisory body on international relations and the Sister/Friendship City program that assists Council in exploring opportunities for mutual economic and cultural benefits with other cities across the globe.

The Terms of Reference of IRFCC stipulate that the Committee's main functions are to review and consider all matters pertaining to Sister/Friendship City relations and make recommendations to Council regarding appropriate actions to undertake based on the results of this review.

Sister City and Friendship City visits support the following City policies: Climate Action Framework; Official Community Plan; Community Safety Plan; Transportation Plan; Economic Development Strategy; Environmental Sustainability Strategy; Housing and Homelessness Strategy; and Social Sustainability Strategy.

### **2.0 BACKGROUND**

The City of Burnaby was one of the first communities in Canada to recognize the economic and cultural opportunities of friendships cities and has supported relationships with many Cities around the world.

The City of Kushiro was the first city that became a Sister City with the City of Burnaby – the Sister City agreement between two cities was signed on September 9, 1965.

### **3.0 GENERAL INFORMATION**

2025 will mark a 60-year anniversary between the City of Burnaby and the City of Kushiro. To mark the anniversary, both Cities have been in correspondence regarding plans for mutual recognition and visits.

The City of Kushiro is planning a gourmet event called “Kushiro Tairyo Donpaku” on September 13-14, 2025 and inviting the delegation of Burnaby to visit Kushiro during this time.

On December 2, 2024, Council received a report titled “2025 Official Sister and Friendship Cities Visit to Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan” (Attachment 1), seeking approval to visit three cities and outlining cost breakdowns for a delegation visit per delegate. Arising from discussion, Council did not approve the recommendation in the report.

At the March 10, 2025, IRFCC meeting, the Committee considered the possibility of visiting only Japan to commemorate the 60th anniversary as Sister Cities, an important milestone for both cities.

#### **4.0 COMMUNICATION AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

Not applicable.

#### **5.0 FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS**

International Relations activities are budgeted within the Gaming Reserve. Sufficient funding is available within the draft 2025-2029 Financial Plan. Approval is required in advance of the 2025-2029 Financial Plan Bylaw, so that staff are able to start planning the trip and make necessary travel arrangements.

Visit cost breakdowns are available in Attachment 1; however, the costs provided may differ from the current rates, as they were calculated based on last year's data.

On behalf of the International Relations and Friendship Cities Committee,

Councillor Pietro Calendino, Chair

Councillor James Wang, Vice Chair

#### **ATTACHMENTS**

Attachment 1 – 2025 Official Sister and Friendship Cities Visit to Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan

#### **REPORT CONTRIBUTORS**

This report was prepared by Anastassiya Denissenko, Administrative Officer 1, and reviewed by Blanka Zeinabova, Sr. Manager Legislative Services, Rajvir Rao, Director Intergovernmental Relations and Public Affairs, and Noreen Kassam, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer / Chief Financial Officer.